



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - APRIL 23, 2021

Dearly beloved,  
Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

**Sunday, April 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after New Sunday**

**Epistle Readings: Acts 4:8-21, Hebrews 3:1-13**

**Holy Gospel: St John 21:15-19 NRSV**

21. 15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” 16 A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

### **Reflection:**

Jesus has commanded us to love each other. His love has brought Him back to His flock after His death on the cross. He was ready to give them many visitations to convince, strengthen, and activate them to follow His mission. During the third appearance, after them finishing their breakfast prepared by Him, He asked Peter whether he loves Him. Peter was ready to say yes, and he said so. When he heard Jesus asking him the same question three times, Peter lost himself in the feeling of guilt of renouncing his Master three times on the night Jesus was arrested. It was three times confessing as a corrective to previous thrice denial. Every time he said yes, Jesus commanded him to tend His flock. Here, love for Christ is easily and clearly connected to Christian service. It is not limited or restricted to clergy ministry. Everything we do becomes the ministry of Christ. If the ministry of the Gospel is limited to church service, it will never bring joy to the whole world. It is through various services humans render collectively that brings joy and gladness to people. Whatever we do, we need to love Christ first. Let our work be an expression of our love towards the Lord. Any service sector we join, let it be like our Lord holding our hands and leading us into it. Every job should be done with a dedication to God. Together we can transform the world!

### **Feasts:**

**April 25, Feast of St George**

The Feast of St George shall be celebrated at our church this Sunday, April 25. Due to the current restrictions, we will not be able to have a gathering or procession. If we have names for intercession, please send them early. If anyone wishes to offer 'nercha', please contact the parish office for guidance.

St George the Martyr was beheaded under the persecution of Emperor Diocletian in 303 AD. He lived in Cappadocia, present-day Turkey and was serving the Roman Army. He held his love for Christ over everything. He could have earned a fortune by yielding to the Emperor's offers, but he refused to do so. He preferred to have Christ as his most incredible fortune and never wished to denounce his



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Master and Saviour. The executioners used various tools to torture him, and he survived many until he was decapitated. After his martyrdom, many churches have been built in his name worldwide. The Malankara Church, too, has many churches under his patronage. Many innocent souls have been saved from evil forces through his intercession like the virgin girl was saved through him killing the dragon. The faithful of Christ should find themselves seated on the horse -ready, alert and equipped- to fight against evil with the Armor of God shielding them. Word of God will be the lance, the tool of victory. Let us hold on to it and be ready to fight against all kinds of evil, negative forces which might come against us. May the intercession of St George be a fortress to us.

**April 21, Yuhanon Mar Ivanios Episcopa, 227<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entombed at Pazhaya Suriyani Pally Chengannur.** He was a bishop from Antioch who visited Malankara in 1751 and remained there till his passing away. There is a story of him healing the son of a local community chief who was hostile to him on his arrival. After his son's healing, the chief, in return, donated tax-free land and properties to Mar Ivanios. The Pazhaya Suriyani Pally at Chengannoor, where Mar Ivanios was interred, is considered one among the oldest church buildings in India. It is a pilgrim centre now. It has Kerala temple architecture, and Christian theological concepts have been beautifully collaborated, and the place attracts visitors for its architectural syncing and cultural value.

**April 22, Mar Thoma III, 333<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, entombed at Kadampanad Cathedral.**

He is called 'Kadampanad Valyappooppan' with high respect and reverence by the people around him. His tomb church has been declared as 'Marthoma Pilgrim Centre'. He could serve the church as Mar Thoma only two years after his enthronement due to his sudden death. His tenure was peaceful. He was a great leader who hailed from Pakalomattom family, one of the oldest families at Kadamattom.

## **WHI Golden Lantern Award goes to HG Dr Gevarghese Mar Coorilos Metropolitan**

WHI, an organization having special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, UN, has chosen Geevarghese Mar Coorilos Metropolitan, Diocese of Mumbai, for its maiden Golden Lantern Award. WHI is affiliated to IAW (International Alliance of Women), the European Union and IWPG (International Women's Peace Group), South Korea. The award is being conferred on the metropolitan for his outstanding efforts in social, educational and charitable spheres. He was chosen for the award for his free education initiatives for slum children, health and treatment schemes designed for TB patients, exemplary contributions to the education sector and opening up of theology learning for women in the upcoming Theo University. As an awardee, Mar Coorilos will get an opportunity to present a paper on the Gregorian community and slum uplift initiatives at the UN's upcoming Global Women Conference. (Courtesy: Indian Express)

The Malankara Orthodox Church is treasured with leaders and activists like Thirumeni. The members of St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto take this opportunity to congratulate His Grace for this recognition. It is also a recognition of the various services the church offers to the broader world.

## **Sister Ann passes away**

Sister Ann, aged 53, a dedicated member and missionary of Bhilai St Thomas Mission, has left for her heavenly abode. She had been instrumental in leading Balawadis (children training centre) and various projects in remote villages. She was heading the Jeevan Jyothi Education Centre at Bhilai till her parting. She was so loving and caring. May we pray for her soul and praise God for the light she had brought to many lives through her ministry. We have many sisters working in various areas and leading many projects. Let us keep them and their service in prayer. The church would need more



dedicated women to carry out various ministries and missions. May the Holy Spirit choose and rise them to transform lives.

## **I.A.O Photo Contest – ‘Hagia Sophia, the churches of the Wisdom of God in History and in the World’**

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) [www.eiao.org](http://www.eiao.org), in the context of its activity for the promotion and preservation of the Christian Orthodox culture and in collaboration with the website OrthPhoto.net, organizes the third in a row photography contest and invites all interested parties to participate in it.

The purpose of the contest is to highlight the concept of the "Wisdom of God" in the modern world and promote the churches built in its honour for centuries. The Church of the Holy Wisdom of God in the City of cities, Istanbul, the “Great Church,” the “Great Monastery,” is a unique monument with a universal character that “belongs to humanity and the world cultural heritage.” Hagia Sophia of Istanbul was the model, which was followed by the building of hundreds of churches until today, all over the Orthodox world dedicated to the Wisdom of God. This dynamic that the Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ, has in the Orthodox world wishes to depict and describe by the present photo contest. Who is there to take it?

## **Earth Day 2021 on April 22**

World has observed Earth Day on April 22. It is intended to call for every individual to become a part of this historic climate summit and making active progress to Restore Our Earth. It is also intended to empower and expand the environmental movement — starting with every citizen. It also calls for action and plan from each individual to take care of Mother Earth. I request all our organisations to include this in the agenda of their next meeting and put forward an action plan.

## **World Book Day 2021 – April 23**

On this day, Miguel de Cervantes (Spain), William Shakespeare (England) and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (Peru) had passed away. This day has been observed as World Book Day by UNESCO since 1995 and has called for a ‘Bookface Challenge’. It has been said that a person with a book in his/her hand is more royal than a king/queen! Vladimir Lenin had called writers as “engineers of human soul”. Prof NV Krishna Warriar, literary critic and writer said, “To clear darkness outside we need to light a lamp and to wipe away darkness from within, one would need to read books”. Books soothe the miserable ones and bring more joy to the joyful. Reading helps in viewing life in a better way. It empowers to fight for life and to fight against social evils like inequality and injustice. If the world has improved for its good, we cannot neglect the role of books behind. Can’t we list at least a few books which have changed our thoughts and life?!

## **Acolytes Meeting and Training**

We have monthly meetings of Acolytes, currently virtual, for fellowship and training. Every field of work/service would demand refresher training and practice with appraisal to check on efficiency. We need to practice and refresh to serve at the Altar better. We earnestly request all the acolytes to attend the scheduled meetings with commitment. Whoever wants to have training for taking the censor, preparing the Altar, dispensing of vestments, reading and chanting, we have provision to avail it on Sunday after the service. We can also have virtual training during monthly sessions, or we can schedule special meetings too. Please find this as a reminder for the upcoming meetings. If we have any suggestions regarding the time and date, please feel free to share with Santosh Varughese or with



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the Vicar.

## Support our Parish

Please support our parish by contributing financially. May it be reminded to please send the Holy Week contribution and the charity share.

## 'Share Your Blessings'- A charity initiative of Gregorian Forum.

Gregorian Seniors Forum is initiating a charity drive, 'Share Your Blessings'. God has blessed us abundantly. The Bible constantly teaches us to share what we have with those who are less fortunate than us. Also, sharing gives us an elevated sense of responsibility towards our society. Share what you have to show how much you care, and please remember when you care for others, the Almighty Lord cares for you more. The fund collected shall be donated towards Mental Health Wellness in Peel Region. Our share can be transferred to [treasurer@sgoctoronto.org](mailto:treasurer@sgoctoronto.org).

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."  
Hebrews. 13:16*

## Names of the beloved departed members, a gentle reminder

We have started receiving emails from members with details of their beloved departed ones and have started adding them to our list. Please continue to let us know as we would like to keep this list going forward for remembrance prayers on the respective Sundays just like we do for Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries.

## Virtual Meetings ahead

Friday, April 23, NEAD MMVS Retreat, 12:00 – 01:00 pm

Friday, April 23, Practice of Lit Hymns for SS Students, 06:00 – 07:00 pm

Saturday, April 24, SGOCT Choir, 11:30 – 01:30 pm

Saturday, April 24, SGOCT Prayer, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

Sunday, April 25, MGOCSM, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

## Liturgical Text for this Sunday

This Sunday, we will be using the English Taksa of St Dionysius Jacob Bar Sleebi. It is short. Please look for the prayers.

## Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1\\_yCG9AWStA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1_yCG9AWStA)

## COVID-19 Guidelines - We are 'not many' but only Ten!

We are again in lockdown with curfew and more restrictions. What we see in the world is the worst affected parts becoming more freed from Covid while the less affected have become more infected. India has more deaths and failing to handle patients due to a massive number of cases. In Kerala, worship centres have restricted participation with only ten members. Night curfew has also been implemented. What can we do now?

Go for the vaccine, at least for the first shot. It will help. Sometimes vaccination can give way to symptoms of cold and chills. Not to worry. It will be better to get immunized. Have some exercise at home involving everyone. Find a common time for a family workout. Eat healthy food. Assure enough sleep. Take steam inhalation at least once a day. Be positive. Say no to stress. Work hard at



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work and when you finish, enjoy family time. Pray together, read from the Word of God, reflect and meditate. Involve children in this daily spiritual exercise too. They will love it. Ask them to reflect upon the Scriptural text. Family time can be a time for sharing and boosting faith. Grow the habit of praying for each other and the whole world. Take time to intercede for those who are in need. Let us be healthy and fit in three ways, Physical, mental and spiritual. Sanitize and keep healthy distancing when out.

**May the Gracious Lord keep us from all harm and heal the entire world.**

Yours in Christ,

Thomas John Achen

Fr Thomas P John

[fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com](mailto:fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com)

+1 (416) 570 5610